

Indiana Historical Society

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Florence Venn, librarian of the William Henry Smith Memorial Library of the Indiana Historical Society, reports acquisition by the library of several important items. Among them are Thomas Hutchins' *Topographical Description of Virginia* (London, 1778) in the original wrappers, accompanied by a fine copy of the map, and Lewis Evans' *Geographical Essays*, printed in Philadelphia in 1755 by Franklin and Hall, also with the rare accompanying map. These were purchased from the London firm, Henry Stevens, Son and Stiles. A most notable addition is the Blaeu *Atlas Major* in eleven volumes, published in Amsterdam in 1662, which was bought from Dr. Louis C. Karpinski of the University of Michigan. Its vellum binding decorated in gold, still in excellent condition, and its many fine maps, beautifully colored by hand, make it an acquisition of which the Historical Society may well be proud.

John Foster's *The Capitulation* (Chillicothe, 1812), an extremely rare pamphlet dealing with Hull's expedition, was acquired from Richard E. Banta of Crawfordsville. The subject of Samuel Wharton's *Plain Facts, Being . . . a Vindication of the Grant . . . to the Proprietors of Indiana* (Philadelphia, 1781) makes it of particular interest. This volume was secured from Goodspeed's Book Shop, which also procured for the library, in its capacity as agent, the first edition of Samuel Cummings' *Western Navigator* (Philadelphia, 1822) with the accompany charts, which was offered at the Dahlinger sale in January. Samuel Woodworth's *Life and Confession of James Hudson* (Indianapolis, 1825) purchased from the Hoosier Book Shop, is an important acquisition both as regards subject matter and imprint. A few Thomas A. Hendricks and Winthrop Sargent letters were secured from the American Autograph Shop.

Since the Smith Memorial Library was established in the State Library and Historical Building at Senate Avenue and Ohio Street, Indianapolis, a number of gifts have been received for which the Society is deeply grateful. The amount of material received as gifts, however, has been somewhat disappointing. The Society has a relatively small income for

an important historical library. It is not attempting to develop a general nor a numerically large library; being in the same building with the State Library, it rather seeks to avoid duplication. Its chief function is to develop a collection of rare and valuable historical material, especially upon the region of the Old Northwest. Much of this material is scattered in homes of families that have been longest in this region. Undoubtedly much of it is known to, or can be located by, members of the Society. May we urge all of our members to look for historical material of this sort, both books and manuscripts, including letters, in their own attics, and to be on the lookout for it among their neighbors and friends. Gifts of this material are greatly appreciated by the Society and are a valuable contribution towards preserving our history. If it cannot be given or purchased at the time, provisions for bequests not only are in order but frequently are a source of satisfaction to the present owners.

An interesting, and thus far a unique, provision has been made in the will of a well-known Indiana citizen. This person is compiling a historical publication and has taken care of the contingency of dying before it is completed by making a bequest for the completion and publication by the Indiana Historical Society. Many of our readers can recall cases in which this was not done and consequently important work was lost. The Society, of course, cannot obligate itself to accept bequests for the publication of all such works, but a reasonable assurance could be given by previous consultation, or other provision could be inserted into the will should the Society not accept the bequest.

Both the committee on covered timber bridges and the committee on early mills have been steadily at work. Much information and many illustrations remain to be collected or definitely given up as unobtainable. However, the committees have gone far enough to begin to plan for final compilation and writing. The committee on publication hopes that in both cases an attractive volume can be produced. No time can be set, but the committees are working toward the completion of their work for publication within the next two or three years.

The membership of the Society has reached an all-time

high. For some years prior to 1925, memberships ran for one year from the date of the payment of the annual dues and no exact figures are available for any one time. It seems certain, however, that the present total membership of 1241 (exclusive of honorary) is the largest in the one hundred eight years of the Society's history.